

Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. today issued the following statement regarding the change of leadership in Will County, where Democrat Larry Walsh on Tuesday defeated Republican Will County Executive Joe Mikan.

"We've been through many political changes over 20 years and we've always come closer to building the airport. Right now we have developers willing to finance the airport with their own money, and they require political stability. They cannot be expected to work with a group that is for the airport one day, then against it, then for it, then against it," Jackson said.

"After having reached out to Will County more than a dozen times over the last two years, and consistently been rebuffed, our lawyers have advised us that since a competition has begun in earnest amongst competing airport plans, it would be inappropriate and a conflict-of-interest to entertain any negotiations with competing groups until the State of Illinois selects one co-sponsor for the airport.

"The newly elected leadership of Will County has publicly stated that he wants to take Jackson's plan and put it under Will County control. That cannot happen because the private developers are under contract with the Abraham Lincoln National Airport Commission.

"We are literally one step away from building this airport and resolving Chicago's longstanding aviation capacity crisis. We will continue to work closely with the Governor and the State and anyone who wants to join us to complete the job," Jackson said today.

The Chicago Tribune on Sept. 26, 2004 reported that "(Larry) Walsh said he believes (Will) county leaders must work with Jackson's group to reach a compromise, taking the best parts of the plan by Jackson and his group to ensure Will County retains control over building and managing the airport."

But Jackson responded by saying, "sharing confidential information, our work product and due diligence beyond that which we have already made public through many forums can only muddy the waters and blur the lines between competing groups. We desire that these lines not be blurred and muddled so that the State can make a clear decision."